

United States Marine Hospital  
(Now United States Public Health  
Service Clinic)  
4141 North Clarendon Avenue  
(opposite Belle Plain Avenue)  
Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1084

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
82-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Washington Planning and Service Center  
1730 North Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia

UNITED STATES MARINE HOSPITAL  
(now United States Public Health Service Clinic)

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Location: 4141 North Clarendon Avenue (opposite Belle Plain Avenue); Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: Negotiations are in progress for the building to be turned over to the State of Illinois by the U. S. Government.

Present Use: Originally a hospital for merchant seamen, it is hoped that the building will be used as a children's mental health clinic.

Statement of Significance: Built between 1869 and 1872, the hospital is one of the earliest extant buildings in Chicago. The exterior walls are of ivory colored Lemont stone. Ample porches are provided at the four sides of the simple three-story block, and the structure is covered over by an elegant mansard roof. The building occupies a tranquil, park-like site near Lake Michigan on the North Side of Chicago.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The building proper occupies a site that was once a street. The land was vacated by order of the Commissioners of Highway, October 31, 1855. The surrounding grounds are made up of lots 11, 12, 17, 18 in School Trustees Subdivision of Fractional Section 16-40-14.

The complete chain of title recorded in Book 544, p. 190, in the Cook County Recorder's Office lists only Margaret B. Kelly as owner of lots 11 and 12 on March 23, 1872 (Document 19834); the remainder of the post-fire record indicates only that the property has been under the control of the United States of America to the present.

2. Date of erection: 1869-1872.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The following are excerpts from Andreas' account of the founding and development of the United States, Marine Hospital in Chicago:

"Next to the department of pensions, the United States Marine Hospital service is the most valuable and important of any of the Government beneficiary institutions. . . The present hospital in the vicinity of Chicago is one of the largest, best appointed and most capably managed in the country. . .

The first Marine Hospital of Chicago was built upon the old parade-ground of Fort Dearborn reservation, the ground being set apart for this purpose about the year 1848, the building and enclosure being completed March 15, 1852, and first occupied in May of that year. . .

On September, 1867, the present hospital at Lake View was commenced. The old hospital building was destroyed in the great fire of 1871. . . In 1868, Congress appointed a commission to select a site for a new hospital. An available site was secured at Lake View, on high ground overlooking the lake, and the Government purchased ten acres here. Work on the new building was begun in 1869, and it was completed in 1872, at a cost of \$4,452,000. Competent judges say the building could not now be reproduced for the same money. The structure comprises a central building and two wings, all four /sic/ stories and basement in height. The entire building is built of Lemont stone, and handsome stone porches grace the various fronts. The main building, which is 350 x 60 feet in area, contains the offices, executive departments, dispensary, and administrative department. The wings each contain three wards, accommodating twenty patients to each ward, and they are thirty feet wide, interior measurement. The building was re-fitted in 1879, under the supervision of Dr. Truman W. Willer, at a cost of \$45,000.

/A. T. Andreas, History of Chicago, Vol. 2 (Chicago: The A. T. Andreas Company, Publishers, 1885), pp. 392-94./

5. Additions and alterations: The American Architect, December 29, 1900, reported the additions of a boiler house, isolation ward, and laundry, all designed by James K. Taylor.

B. Bibliography:

Andreas, A. T. History of Chicago. Vol. 2. Chicago: A. T. Andreas Company, Publishers, 1885. pp. 392-94.

Wood engraving of original structure at Lake View, p. 393. Additional history of the institution is contained in Andreas Vol. 3, p. 570.

"Boiler-house, isolation ward and laundry building: U. S. Marine Hospital, Chicago, Illinois; James K. Taylor, Architect," American Architect LXX (December 29, 1900). pl. fol. 104.

Tallmadge, Thomas E. Architecture in Old Chicago. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941. p. 90.  
Mention of the first Marine Hospital was Fort Dearborn.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Built between 1869 and 1872, the hospital is one of the earliest extant buildings in Chicago. The exterior walls are of ivory colored Lemont stone. Ample porches are provided at the four sides of the simple three-story block, and the structure is covered over by an elegant mansard roof. The building occupies a tranquil, park-like site near Lake Michigan on the North Side of Chicago.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Three and one-half stories on a raised basement.
2. Layout-shape: An elongated rectangle, wider central block and end pavillions.
3. Foundations: Limestone.
4. Wall construction: Light-colored, rough-faced lemont limestone; laid in random courses, smooth-faced belt courses at base of each floor.
5. Structural system, framing: Mill construction.
6. Porches, stoops: The original porches and sun decks to the west (front), north, and south have been enclosed; that to the east has been removed to allow for the abutment of a large T-shaped addition to the east. The porches are supported on large limestone piers with chamfered corners and molded square capitals.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is spanned by

a segmental arch; it is preceeded by a vestibule created by the enclosure of the porch.

- b. Windows and shutters: The windows are deeply recessed, framed in smooth-faced stone, with smooth-faced stone sills and segmental arches above. Below each sill is a rectangular relief panel in stone. The windows in the end pavilions have round-headed arches, broken by a larger keystone. The round-arched windows of the mansard have robust wooden moldings and ornament.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The central block is covered by a mansard roof, with semi-circular slate (?) shingles. The remainder of the building has a low hip-roof, with asphalt shingling.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Reverse-curved corbels support the projecting eaves of the mansard and the end pavilions. The wings themselves display a more simple and severe treatment of cornice and eave.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: (At the time of this visit, only the first floor was open for inspection; the hospital no longer serves resident patients).

The original building is composed of a central block, with flanking wings, which are terminated by wider T-shaped pavilions (originally porches). The lobby and administration offices are in the central block, with other offices in the first floor wings. The upper floors contained hospital wards. To the southeast of the lobby is a single-story apsidial structure which is a medical library and an office.

- 2. Stairways: Remodeled, iron stairs, enclosed by wire cages.
- 3. Flooring: Main floor lobby: dark maison and white marble square tile flooring, with 8" maison marble floor molding. The original white veined marble flooring is preserved in the medical library room.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster; the south end of the first floor is a painted rough-faced stone wall. There is a deep ceiling molding in the lobby.

5. Doorways and doors: Mostly remodeled; the lobby and first floor corner have large, segmental-arched openings along the hall.
6. Lighting: Fluorescent.
7. Heating: Steam heating from adjacent boiler room.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation, landscaping: The hospital faces east and west; the eastern entrance is now reached through the large addition to the original building. The addition more than doubles the capacity of the first building. The entire complex is surrounded by broad lawns and trees; a semi-circular drive provides access to the west entrance from Clarendon Street. There are iron fences with limestone posts along the east and west sides of the property; to the north and south there are low stone walls with iron fencing on top. On the east lawn, there are two rows of small red brick cottages. The hospital has the benefit of being located near Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan to the east; however, the neighborhood to the west is slowly deteriorating.

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